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General and complete disarmament: illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons

Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the Secretary-General's broad-based consultations on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons following the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 55/33 Q of 20 November 2000. The report presents the results of meetings convened on the issue under United Nations auspices, as well as those convened by regional and subregional organizations and by States and groups of States. The annex to the report contains information and data provided by a number of Member States on the types and quantities of surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons that have been destroyed, and on the methods of their destruction.

* A/56/150.

** The present report contains information received from Member States up to July 2001.

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I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 55/33 Q of 20 November 2001, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his broad-based consultations, within available financial resources and with any other assistance provided by Member States in a position to do so, and to provide the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects with information on the magnitude and scope of illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and the role of the United Nations in collecting, collating, sharing and disseminating information on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.[1]

2. By the same resolution, the General Assembly encouraged States in a position to do so to take appropriate national measures to destroy surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons, and to provide, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on the types and quantities of arms destroyed as well as the methods of their destruction, and requested the Secretary-General to circulate this information annually to all States.

3. Pursuant to the above request, a note verbale was addressed to all States on 23 March 2001, inviting them to communicate the relevant information. The replies received are contained in the annex to the present report. Further replies will be issued as addenda to the report.

4. The present report provides an overview of the results of meetings convened under United Nations auspices, as well as by regional and subregional organizations and States or groups of States on the issue. While some of those meetings did not focus exclusively on the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, the issue figured prominently in their discussions. It should be noted that all the meetings were aimed at, inter alia, contributing to the successful outcome of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

II. Meetings convened under United Nations auspices

5. In his 2000 report on illicit traffic in small arms (A/55/323 and Add.1), the Secretary-General observed that the consultations held in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/54 R of 1 December 1999 served to document a heightened awareness of the issue of illicit small arms trafficking. An increasing number of States, regional organizations and representatives of civil society are in the process of proposing, formulating and implementing a range of prevention and reduction measures to combat this phenomenon. Others have further examined the impact of illicit trafficking in their respective areas. The broad-based consultations have highlighted clearly the importance of understanding the regional and subregional context in which illicit trafficking in small arms takes place.

6. In this context, a regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific was held under United Nations auspices at Wellington, from 27 to 30 March 2001.

United Nations Regional Disarmament Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

7. Co-hosted by the Government of New Zealand and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Regional Disarmament Meeting devoted part of its programme to addressing illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons from the perspective of Asia and the Pacific.

8. Participants stressed that, given the nature of the problem, there was a need for global action and the adoption of a comprehensive approach. The hope was expressed that the 2001 Conference would be a milestone in international efforts to tackle the problem. With regard to the specific situation in the region, it was pointed out that the magnitude and scope of small arms trafficking was, as elsewhere, difficult to quantify.

9. Participants from the region of the Pacific Islands Forum revealed that, in countries of the region, police and other investigations had indicated that the primary sources of weapons of concern were losses from official arms stockpiles, the large numbers of weapons left after the Second World War and subsequent conflicts in the region. In the South Pacific, the

Conference of Chiefs of Police had agreed to adopt a common approach to weapons control in the region, known as the Nadi Framework of principles, which provides a basis for cooperative action in the region.

10. The participant from the region of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) informed the meeting that ASEAN member States were working closely to follow up the Regional Seminar on the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held at Jakarta in May 2000. It had been agreed at the seminar that action to combat transnational crime provided the most amenable framework for developing cooperation to combat and prevent the proliferation of small arms in the region, in particular with regard to sharing of information and coordination of activities and, perhaps, the establishment of a regional database. It was considered that there was a need to address post-conflict disarmament issues in some areas.

11. The South Asian participants stressed that there were many sources of small arms of concern in their region, including weapons left after the Second World War and subsequent conflicts; arms supplied to Afghanistan in the 1980s; and arms supplied to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. These weapons were subsequently diffused into societies, and had been used by insurgent groups, bandits and terrorists. It was emphasized that, although national efforts were required to combat and prevent unauthorized access to arms, collect and dispose of arms and tackle the problems of demand, success could not be achieved without regional cooperation. The priorities in that regard included coordinated border controls (including maritime borders), regional information exchange and joint training. It was considered that regional civil society networks also had a key role to play.

12. Many participants noted that international assistance was important in tackling the problem. It was noted that several donor countries had already earmarked resources to provide assistance in controlling and reducing excessive and destabilizing accumulations and flows of small arms and light weapons, and were interested in receiving requests from countries for assistance.

III. Meetings convened by regional and subregional organizations

13. By paragraph 2 of its resolution 55/33 Q, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to promote regional and subregional initiatives and requested the Secretary-General, within available financial resources, and those States in a position to do so, to assist States in taking such initiatives to address the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in affected regions. The Assembly invited the Secretary-General to utilize those initiatives as part of his consultations.

Organization of African Unity

14. Pursuant to the decision on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its thirty-fifth ordinary session, held at Algiers in July 1999,[2] the OAU secretariat convened a ministerial conference at Bamako, on 30 November and 1 December 2000. The purpose of the Conference was to develop a common position in preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/CONF.192/PC/23, annex).

15. In the Declaration, the African Ministers expressed their grave concern that the problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons continued to have devastating consequences for stability and development in Africa. They agreed that it was vital to address the problem in a comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and efficient manner, and recommended a series of practical actions to be taken by OAU member States at the national and regional levels. Further, they strongly appealed to the wider international community and, in particular, to arms supplier countries to engage, support and fund the efforts of OAU member States to address the problem in the continent.

16. The Bamako Declaration manifested the resolve and political commitment by African countries to fight

the scourge of the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in the continent. It recommended comprehensive and concrete measures to tackle the problem at both the national and regional levels. It also made a strong appeal to the wider international community and, in particular, to the arms supplier countries to adopt a range of specific measures to join and support African countries in their efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

Latin American and Caribbean States

17. The Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States was held at Brasilia, from 22 to 24 November 2000, and resulted in the adoption of the Brasilia Declaration (A/CONF.192/PC/19, annex). The meeting was convened to foster a common approach to the work of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its Preparatory Committee, as well as to the international efforts to address effectively and comprehensively the problems resulting from illicit trafficking in small arms.

18. In the Brasilia Declaration, countries in the region, inter alia, reaffirmed the commitment undertaken by them in the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (A/54/374, annex); stressed the importance of regional and subregional as well as bilateral coordination and cooperation in addressing the small arms problem; and considered that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects provided a promising opportunity for the international community as a whole to tackle the problem, in a manner which would alleviate the plight of populations besieged by criminality and armed conflicts fuelled by this illicit trade, and bring benefits in terms of social and economic development as well as national, regional and international stability.

19. The participating States agreed that the United Nations Conference should seek to accomplish a number of goals, including the adoption of a global, balanced and non-discriminatory approach to the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons that takes into account the specificities and experiences of regions, subregions and individual countries; the strengthening of international cooperation in all its aspects; the adoption of concrete measures, characterized by a flexible, practical and multifaceted approach that would confer upon regions, subregions and countries the necessary capacity to formulate plans that most adequately suit their needs and specific problems; and acknowledgement of the important role civil society can play in achieving the goal of the Conference.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

20. Pursuant to the mandate given to it at the Istanbul Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held in November 1999, the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation examined concrete measures to combat the problem of the spread of small arms and light weapons and subsequently started the negotiations which resulted in the adoption by OSCE, on 24 November 2000, of a comprehensive document on the issue.

21. The document contains norms, principles and measures covering all aspects of the problem. Its main aim is to combat the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. In particular, the document focuses on:

(a) Combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including manufacturing, marking and record-keeping, common export criteria and export controls;

(b) Management of stockpiles, reduction of surpluses and destruction;

(c) Small arms and light weapons as an integral part of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

22. The participating States agreed to the establishment of a list of small arms contact points among delegations to OSCE and in capitals. They also agreed that the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation would review, on a regular basis, the implementation of the norms, principles and measures contained in the document, keep the scope and content of the document under regular review and, in particular, work on its further development in the light of its implementation

and of the work of the United Nations and other international organizations and institutions.

Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa

23. The Government of Kenya, with the support of the Swiss Emergency Fund, convened a meeting of governmental experts on small arms at Nairobi, from 6 to 8 November 2000. Representatives of Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, the Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania participated in the meeting, which was also attended by observers for a number of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

24. The aim of the meeting was to develop a strategy for the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa (A/54/860-S/2000/385, annex), which had been adopted by 10 East African Governments at Nairobi, on 15 March 2000.

25. The meeting agreed on a coordinated agenda for action and the associated implementation plan. The agenda for action emphasized the need for a coordinated regional approach to addressing the proliferation of small arms.

26. Issues addressed under the agenda include the institutional framework, regional cooperation and coordination, legislative measures, development of operations and capacity, information exchange and record-keeping, aspects related to control, seizures, forfeitures, distribution, collection and destruction of firearms, and public awareness of the issue of small arms.

Economic Community of Western African States

27. A subregional workshop, organized by the secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, was held at Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 30 August 2000, within the framework of the implementation of the Plan of Action of that Programme. The chiefs and officials of the police, customs and gendarmerie in the subregion and a representative of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa attended the workshop. The objective was to develop a curriculum for the training of security forces, customs, police, military and paramilitary forces in the control of small arms.

Rio Group

28. On the occasion of the twentieth regular meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held at Santiago on 27 March 2001, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group discussed the issue of small arms and light weapons and adopted a communiqué (A/CONF.192/3, annex).

29. In the communiqué, the Ministers of the Rio Group reaffirmed the importance of achieving a common approach to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects that would take into account the specific needs and experiences of individual regions, subregions and countries.

30. The Ministers recalled that the illicit trade in small arms in the region is mainly associated with drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, mercenary activities and other criminal acts, and held that crime prevention must therefore be an integral part of the approach to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

31. They reiterated the desire of the members of the Rio Group to participate actively in the United Nations Conference and expressed the belief that the Conference should adopt a political declaration and a global programme of action that would constitute an integral approach to the problem.

Central America

32. The third International Conference on Small Arms in Central America was held at Managua, from 23 to 25 April 2001. It was also the Second International Inter-Parliamentary Conference between the Parliaments of Central America, Spain and Sweden on Small Arms. Among the Central American States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama participated in the meeting. The

Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, attended the meeting.

33. The meeting examined the situation of small arms and light weapons against the backdrop of the upcoming United Nations Conference. The goal was to establish a joint Central American position for the Conference, and to move towards the harmonization of national legislation on issues such as arms brokering and trade.

34. The meeting agreed:

(a) That all Central American countries should send delegations to the United Nations Conference and play an active role therein;

(b) To present a common position, based on the Brasilia Declaration;

(c) To conduct broad-based consultations with non-governmental organizations, civil society and law-enforcement agencies;

(d) To encourage the non-governmental organizations in the region to be more proactive and work closely with Governments in tackling the problem of small arms;

(e) Central American States should bear in mind the activities of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials when shaping their common position.

Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe

35. The Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons Collection and Destruction, jointly hosted and chaired by the Governments of Bulgaria and Canada, was held at Sofia, from 17 to19 October 2000. Representatives and experts from over 30 countries and organizations participated.

36. At the seminar, substantive discussions were held on a range of issues related to the prevention of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons, with a particular focus on activities for their collection and destruction. Relevant cases and programmes carried out by countries in the region with the support of international organizations and donor countries were examined. The participants also exchanged information on national experience and practice in this field.

37. A number of recommendations were put forward at the seminar, including the following:

(a) Peace support mandates should include explicit terms of reference for the early collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons;

(b) The terms of peace settlements should, where appropriate, include micro-disarmament;

(c) Environmentally sound methods of destruction should be used where possible, although no affordable destruction method can be deemed 100 per cent ecologically safe;

(d) States should support the work currently being undertaken by the Secretary-General to elaborate a manual on environmentally sound destruction techniques;

(e) Experience gained and skills developed through the implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe could be used for the development of projects for the destruction of small arms;

(f) Standards should be established for the management and destruction of stockpiles;

(g) A regional facility or mobile facility for destruction, funded by Member States, could be made available for use by OSCE and/or the United Nations;

(h) Public-awareness campaigns are important for ensuring full public participation in weapon collection programmes;

(i) The needs of a recipient country and the capabilities of a donor country must be closely coordinated;

(j) There should be a coordination of effort and synergy among national, regional and international endeavours. Complementarities among such efforts should be recognized and developed;

(k) More systematic efforts should be made to catalogue and share best practice relating to the collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons in order to enable others to benefit from accumulated experience and knowledge;

(l) The international community must look beyond the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons since the Conference is only the beginning of the process.

ASEAN Regional Forum

38. The International Conference on Small Arms Proliferation and Trade in the Asian and Pacific region, organized by the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung as an inter-sessional meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, was held at Phnom Penh, on 19 and 20 February 2001. The Conference brought together governmental officials, experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations from the 10 ASEAN member States, and representatives of its 11 dialogue partners, the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as regional specialized agencies and institutes.

39. The Conference discussed a wide range of issues, including international policies on small arms and disarmament, the relationship between disarmament and development, small arms proliferation and its impact on security and development, small arms proliferation and illicit trade in Asia and the Pacific, practical disarmament and conversion: international experience and lessons learned, and new initiatives for the region in view of the upcoming United Nations Conference.

40. At the meeting, a draft declaration on small arms and light weapons was circulated and discussed. The draft was to be submitted to the ASEAN Regional Forum for adoption.

Pacific Islands Forum

41. The countries of the Pacific Islands Forum are already acting to meet the problems posed by small arms and light weapons and steady progress has been made towards that goal. In this connection, in October 2000, a meeting of the leaders of countries members of the Pacific Islands Forum was held on the subject. This meeting was followed by the convening of a workshop on small arms in May 2001.

42. At the meeting held in October 2000, leaders of the member countries of the Pacific Islands Forum agreed that model legislation should be developed to facilitate implementation and enforcement of the common approach to weapons control contained in the Nadi Framework of principles. It was expected that this model legislation would be finalized by mid-2001.

43. A workshop on small arms was held at Brisbane, from 9 to 11 May 2001. The main purpose of the workshop was further to develop draft model legislation for the establishment of a common regional approach to weapons control, which has been under development in the Pacific Islands Forum for a number of years.

44. The workshop provided practical advice to legislators, law-enforcement officers, customs officials and other influential practitioners involved in regulating the use and ownership of small arms and light weapons, and to help them to implement and enforce the model legislation. Its aim was to achieve endorsement of the model legislation at the meeting of leaders of countries members of the Pacific Islands Forum, to be held in Nauru in August 2001. The workshop also provided a forum for targeted discussion of practical enforcement measures, including licensing procedures and best practice in the effective custody and control of official weapons.

IV. Meetings convened by States and groups of States

Franco-Swiss Workshop on Traceability of Small Arms and Light Weapons: Tracing, Marking and Record-Keeping

45. The Franco-Swiss Workshop on Traceability of Small Arms and Light Weapons was held at Geneva, on 12 and 13 March 2001 (see A/CONF.192/PC.38). Representatives of more than 90 States participated, along with representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations, technical experts and relevant non-governmental organizations.

46. The overall aim of the workshop was to discuss the establishment of an international agreement enabling effective international cooperation in tracing the sources and lines of supply of small arms and light weapons, which contribute to the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of such weapons, in particular in regions of conflict or tension.

Key elements of such an agreement were proposed at the workshop.

47. There was wide support among participants for the development of international arrangements and a binding instrument that would enable the timely and reliable tracing of lines of supply of small arms and light weapons by relevant authorities. There was also broad acknowledgement that such an instrument would usefully complement the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[3] which focuses on enhancing law-enforcement efforts to combat and prevent the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms involving organized criminal groups. Cooperation among States and between States and the United Nations and other international organizations was also examined.

48. Participants at the workshop recognized the need to establish agreed minimum standards on marking and record-keeping. It was considered that the minimum standards could, as appropriate, build upon the standards for marking and record-keeping established for firearms in the above-mentioned recently agreed Protocol. The need to take appropriate account of criteria, including cost-effectiveness, technical and economic feasibility and reliability, in developing marking requirements was stressed. As regards record-keeping, views were expressed that there was also a need to establish agreed minimum standards; it was noted that national systems for record-keeping could vary according to differing national circumstances and regulatory arrangements, provided that national authorities ensured that the systems in their country were sufficient to enable individual arms to be identified and traced in a timely and reliable manner.

49. The workshop also explored the possibility of setting up mechanisms and bodies to promote international cooperation and assistance in tracing small arms and light weapons. In that context, it was pointed out that the provision for assistance in regional agreements, such as in the Inter-American Convention, could be usefully examined.

Illicit circulation of small arms in Latin America and weapons of mass destruction: their potential hazard

50. A seminar on the theme "Illicit circulation of small arms in Latin America and weapons of mass destruction: their potential hazard" was held at Buenos Aires, from 18 to 20 April 2001. The purpose was to promote a better understanding among governmental representatives, the industry and non-governmental organizations, as well as regional and subregional organizations, on different aspects of present and future security threats to the region. The seminar was convened in follow-up initiatives taken in the region in 1996, 1997 and 1999, in cooperation with the United Nations. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean contributed to the debate.

51. The seminar focused its discussions on problems related to the excessive accumulation of small arms, the increase in their availability, the use of military-type arms in criminal actions, and the threat posed by such use to democracies in developing countries and to the life and property of civilians, among other things.

52. The meeting also underlined the increasingly important role that non-governmental organizations have played in past years on issues of concern to the region, such as public security, governmental corruption, the proliferation of small arms, ammunition and explosives, and the defence of human rights.

Organization of American States and the 2001 United Nations Conference: tackling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

53. A conference, organized by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in cooperation with the British-American Security Information Centre, International Alert and Saferworld, Project Ploughshares and the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, was held at Ottawa on 23 and 24 May 2001. Some 40 representatives of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in the region participated.

54. The conference discussed a wide range of issues, including the scope of the 2001 United Nations Conference and the structure and elements of the

programme of action to be adopted by the Conference and its relevance to the OAS region; the link between State-authorized transfers and the illicit trade in the OAS region; reduction of demand and acquisition of weapons at the level of the State through the enhancement of mutual security arrangements among States, at both the regional and subregional level; priority needs for assistance in tackling the illicit trade in the region; regional experience with regard to programmes for the collection and destruction of illicit arms; the nature of national export control systems across the OAS region and the scope and methods for their enforcement; prospects for the development of a regional transparency mechanism governing the import and export of small arms and light weapons; and the contribution to be made by OAS countries, through the sharing of experiences and priorities in addressing the small arms problem, to the United Nations Conference and to the development of an effective global programme of action.

55. The conference reaffirmed the important achievements of OAS in efforts to address the challenge posed by illicit small arms and light weapons, in particular the conclusion of the far-reaching Inter-American Convention. It also acknowledged the challenges confronted by the region in implementing the Convention, including the need for more members to ratify it (only 12 of 35 States had ratified the Convention), the need to promote coherence between national legislation and the Convention and the need to enhance the exchange of information among States.

56. Furthermore, the conference explored potential areas for future cooperation with other regions of the world. It was proposed that OAS learn from and share experiences with southern Africa, West Africa and East Africa, as well as member countries of OSCE in areas such as strengthening controls on legal transfers, addressing the small arms problem in the context of human security, development and peace-building.

57. It was also pointed out that there was scope for the States members of OAS to address a number of other issues within the framework of the Inter-American Convention, for example, the regulation of arms brokering. It was considered that, although the Convention did not explicitly refer to that issue, the provisions for combating illicit trafficking were relevant to control of the activities of arms brokering and transport agents, and that therefore the issue should be given due consideration.

58. Participants discussed the possibility of strengthening the draft Programme of Action to be adopted by the United Nations Conference in such areas as marking and record-keeping, addressing more adequately both the demand side and the supply side, and the establishment of a more robust follow-up mechanism. It was pointed out by a number of participants that the United Nations Conference represented not the end, but the beginning of the process of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in and use of small arms and light weapons.

V. Observations

59. The growing concern among States over the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has resulted in increased activities and events which, in turn, have led to the formulation of concrete measures by States, and enhanced cooperation among them to combat the illicit trade in and misuse of small arms and light weapons. These activities and events also helped to build the momentum towards the 2001 United Nations Conference. More and more States and regions took the initiative to develop common priorities or a common position on illicit trafficking and the other issues to be considered by the Conference and, in particular, the drafting and formulation of the programme of action to be adopted by it. This is a clear manifestation of the high expectation that the international community placed on the Conference. Further, there was recognition that the global nature of the problem of illicit small arms trafficking warranted an integrated international approach to the problem.

60. The conclusion of the negotiation at Vienna of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and will provide an international law enforcement mechanism for crime prevention and the prosecution of traffickers, is a significant step forward by the international community in its efforts to address the challenge posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Action taken by States

61. With the concerted efforts of Governments, the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as civil society, awareness of the issue of illicit small arms trafficking has been greatly heightened over the past few years. This has resulted in further concrete action taken by States, collectively or individually, to tackle the challenge posed by small arms and light weapons, including the formulation and strengthening of relevant national laws, legislation and regulations, enhanced coordination among competent national administrative authorities and law-enforcement agencies, the establishment or strengthening of procedures relating to the management and security of stockpiles of weapons and the application of strict controls on their transfer and trade and, in particular, the destruction of confiscated, decommissioned and surplus weapons, as is manifested in, but not limited to, the information provided by States (see annex). It should be noted that States have communicated such information to the Secretariat through other means as well, such as letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which have been issued as official documents of the United Nations.

Bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation

62. States and regions have increasingly recognized the fact that bilateral, regional and international cooperation is crucial to any success in their fight against illicit trafficking in small arms. Thus, they have taken action to deepen and strengthen cooperation among States, regions and civil society in this regard, with a view to preventing illicit traffickers from exploiting the differences in various national and regional control regimes and reducing the huge numbers of illicit weapons already in circulation in various regions.

63. Various States and regional organizations are engaged in efforts to create cooperative frameworks among police, intelligence, customs and border control officials in combating the illicit trafficking in small arms. Mechanisms and regional networks for the sharing of information are being put into place in a number of areas. Regional and subregional initiatives have been taken to harmonize national legislation and regulations in the relevant areas.

64. The recently concluded Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition has provided a legal framework within which States parties would cooperate with each other and with relevant international organizations in such areas as training and technical assistance, with a view to preventing, combating and eradicating such illicit activities.

Common positions

65. As a result of the momentum built up in the preparations for the 2001 United Nations Conference, in particular in relation to the consideration and adoption by the Conference of a programme of action, States, especially in the regions most affected by the small arms problem, have moved to formulate common positions.

66. As mentioned in section III above, OAU adopted the Bamako Declaration, the Latin American and Caribbean countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration, and OSCE adopted a comprehensive framework document on small arms. Initiatives have also been taken to harmonize and coordinate the positions of member States in many subregions, such as that of the Southern African Development Community, in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa, of the Rio Group, by the Central American States, of ASEAN, of the Pacific Islands Forum and of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. All of those efforts made an important contribution to the negotiation and adoption of the Programme of Action by the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Notes

[1] The requested information, including that received from Member States, was provided to the Conference and its Preparatory Committee in the following documents: A/54/155, A/54/160, A/54/260, A/54/404, A/55/189, A/55/216, A/55/323, S/2000/1092, S/PRST/1999/28, A/CONF.192/2-6 and A/CONF.192/8-13.

[2] A/54/424, annex II, decision AHG/Dec.137 (xxxv).

[3] General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I.

Annex

Replies received from Governments

Australia

[Original: English]
[2 July 2001]

Over the period from July 2000 to June 2001, Australian authorities seized a number of illegally held small arms and light weapons. In accordance with Australian practice, all such weapons were held in secure stockpiles before being destroyed. Over the course of the period in question, Australian authorities destroyed 24,909 firearms, small arms and light weapons. This number comprised seized illegal weapons, surplus weapons and legal weapons handed in to authorities or no longer required.

Bangladesh

[Original: English]
[16 April 2001]

Bangladesh fully supports the objectives of General Assembly resolution 55/33 Q. With regard to paragraph 3 on national measures, Bangladesh considers it opportune to provide a response after the conclusion of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in order for the information to be in accord with the outcome of the Conference relating to the specific areas in question.

Brazil

[Original: English]
[4 June 2001]

With the support of the Ministry of Justice, the government of the State of Rio de Janeiro is organizing a public destruction ceremony of tens of thousands of firearms previously attached to judicial processes. The ceremony will take place in the city of Rio de Janeiro in June 2001, a few weeks prior to the beginning of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The event will be preceded by wide press coverage, for the purpose of awareness-raising among the population. It is also intended as a contribution to highlighting the importance of the upcoming United Nations Conference.

The public destruction of firearms is backed by the Council of Public Security of Rio de Janeiro, a body headed by the State Governor that includes over 30 representatives from both government and civil society. From the very beginning, the idea of holding a public destruction ceremony of firearms received full and widespread support from non-governmental organizations and other representatives of Brazilian civil society. The preparations for the ceremony in Rio de Janeiro have been the result of a nationwide campaign carried out by the Ministry of Justice, state governments and civil society to encourage the disarming of individuals.

The Brazilian Ministry of Defence, which, under Brazilian law, is in charge of determining the final disposition of confiscated and illegally held weapons, regularly destroys arms that have been confiscated by the police forces. The Brazilian Government has been implementing measures aimed at strengthening its control over the circulation, imports and exports of firearms, as well as at rendering the access of criminals to firearms more difficult. In June 2000, it launched a national public security plan that is meant to give greater impetus to the implementation of those measures.

Bulgaria

[Original: English]
[5 July 2001]

Techniques and procedures for the destruction of small arms

In accordance with Bulgaria's international commitments and the programme for restructuring of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Defence has already started implementing projects for destruction of surplus small arms and light weapons. In accordance with a decision of the Interdepartmental Council at the Council of Ministers, an inter-agency group for coordination on the issues of small arms and

light weapons destruction has been established, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of Defence. The Ministry of Defence has prepared lists of surplus small arms and light weapons and has identified the agencies that will destroy them. Technologies and schedules for destruction have been developed, and the necessary financial resources are being provided, including through foreign donors. The first stage of the destruction project developed by the Ministry of Defence will require financing of up to US$ 1.6 million.

The Terem company, and in particular its branch located in the town of Veliko Tarnovo, has been designated by the Ministry of Defence as the basic contractor for the destruction of small arms and light weapons in Bulgaria. Terem was tasked by the Ministry of Defence with developing a technology for small arms and light weapons destruction. The principles that guided the development of the technology were: (a) the technology must reliably destroy the weapon so it becomes totally unusable; and (b) strict accountability must be maintained throughout the process.

The company has developed procedures for the destruction of 27 types of small arms and light weapons. The process is based on crushing some components (plastic deformation) and oxy-fuel or saw-cutting others. The design of the individual components mandates the process (i.e., small components are crushed and large or heavy components are cut). Detailed steps have been developed for each weapon, including initial steps such as ensuring the chamber is empty, serial number identification and degreasing. Scrap generated by the process is disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

The degree of practical unusability is established on the basis of technical requirements for the destruction of small arms and light weapons. The destruction is carried out in strict conformity with the requirements of a technological process for destruction of items of small arms and light weapons and by observing the requirements of the law on healthy and safe conditions of labour. The degree of dismantling is commensurate with the possibilities for melting the constituent parts of the corresponding items. The diagram of the technological process includes the following main elements: (a) accepting the item at the Veliko Tarnovo branch of Terem; (b) dismantling; (c) sorting out the dissembled parts; (d) destruction of the item; (e) collection of the destroyed parts; and (f) transportation of the scrap to the storage facility.

The technological process is conducted while strictly observing a series of normative documents such as the list of the destroyed small arms and light weapons, the inventory of parts prepared for deformation and the inventory of scrap after destruction.

The list of the items for destruction has columns for the number, the signature of the client, the signature of the controller and the signature of the chief of the workshop.

In the inventory of parts prepared for deformation, there are data with the name of the item, the number of the series, the number of the packaging cases, the names of the separate dismantled parts, their production numbers, their total number, and the signatures of the chief of the workshop and of the general quality control official. As for the scrap, the names of the items are described after destruction, as are the type and the quantity of the materials obtained after the destruction of each item, and the general amount of scrap.

The procedures after the destruction of small arms and light weapons can be divided in two groups: those applied for small arms and those for artillery systems.

(a) Small arms

The procedure for small arms starts by transportation of the armament from unit 22060 to the workshop known as "Repair of armament". Armaments are accepted in packaging cases by using an acceptance-transfer protocol of the items, which are separated according to type and number. In the workshop, the small arms are taken from their packaging cases, and they are described by type and number, in accordance with the list of small arms and light weapons subject to destruction. The lubricants are then eliminated from the arms (barrel, breech and breech casing) by white alkyd enamel polish. After the dismantling, the dismantled parts are sorted and the barrels, the breeches and breech casings are put in cases. An inventory of the parts prepared for deformation is prepared, and the parts are transported to the site of destruction. Items such as the barrel, breech etc., are destroyed through plastic deformation, using a hydraulic press. The breech blocks and a part

of the barrels (if large calibre) are destroyed through cutting by use of a stationary saw.

Control over the destruction is conducted by authorized officials from the Veliko Tarnovo branch of the Terem company. The destroyed parts are put into cases (accompanied by the list of small arms and light weapons subject to destruction, the inventory of parts prepared for deformation and the inventory of scrap after destruction), and are transported to the scrap warehouse.

(b) Artillery systems

The acceptance and transportation of the artillery systems to the workshop "Repair of the armament" does not differ in principle from the procedure applied in the case of small arms. In the workshop deconservation of the artillery systems is carried out, then dismantling of the latter and elimination of the lubricants from the separate elements and parts, after which they are destroyed by: (a) gas-plasma cutting of gun tubes, breeches, upper gun mounts and cradles, elevation and traversing mechanisms, tube brakes, trials, platforms and other parts; and (b) plastic deformation (or cutting) of anti-recoil mechanisms, nodes and aggregates. Control over the destruction is carried out in the same way as with small arms. The destroyed parts are sorted out in palettes and are transported to the scrap warehouse. The above-mentioned normative documents are applied.

2. Technique and procedures for destruction of separate parts of small arms and light weapons

The destruction of the separate parts of small arms and light weapons is conducted through plastic deformation and through cutting.

The destruction through plastic deformation is done with hydraulic presses of 400, 200 and 150 tons, depending on the character and type of the parts. A set of instrumental equipment is used corresponding to the configuration of the part and the type of the press. The plastic deformation is applied most of all for aggregates and parts of the small arms.

The destruction through cutting is done by using a stationary saw and gas-plasma equipment. With the stationary saw, technological equipment for mechanical fastening and orientation is used. This type of cutting is applied most often in the destruction of bigger parts and aggregates of the small arms having higher strength of materials. The gas-plasma equipment is applied in the destruction of large parts and aggregates of the artillery pieces.

The described techniques for destruction of small arms and light weapons require the following equipment: (a) a 20-ton crane for unloading the items from the railway platforms; (b) a 10-ton workshop crane for sorting out the aggregates and parts subject to cutting; (c) technological equipment set for the plastic deformation of aggregates and parts; (d) hydraulic presses for the plastic deformation of parts, elements and aggregates of the small arms and the artillery pieces; (e) a mechanic's worktable for dismantling small arms; (f) technological equipment for dismantling elements and aggregates of the artillery pieces; (g) warehouses for storing the liquid of the anti-recoil mechanisms; (h) gas-plasma equipment for cutting; and (i) manual and stationary saws for the cutting of medium and large parts, elements and aggregates.

The Stability Pact Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons Collection and Destruction, held at Sofia, from 17 to 19 October 2000, focused on practical aspects and needs in the collection and destruction techniques of small arms and light weapons in the region of south-eastern Europe. At the invitation of the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence, the participants in the Seminar visited the industrial destruction facility Terem at Veliko Tarnovo. A demonstration of the Bulgarian destruction techniques and methods used for several types of small arms and light weapons and the possibilities for using Terem as a regional facility for small arms and light weapons were positively assessed. The destruction technology developed by Terem also received positive evaluation by the United States-Norwegian assessment team which visited the factory in October 2000.

Canada

[Original: English]
[12 June 2001]

Canadian Forces small arms

Weapon	Quantity
.177 air rifle	5
Lee Enfield rifle	1
.22 calibre rifle	78
.303 Lee Enfield rifle	260
FNC1 rifle	4
C7 rifle	1
C3A1 sniper rifle	1
12 gauge shotgun	8
Lion shotgun	4
C5 GPMG 7.62 mm	1
C6 GPMG Flex 7.62 mm	1
.22 pistol	2
9 mm pistol	29
Revolver	5
Foreign weapons	
DPM light machine gun	1
Degtyarev RPD 7.6 light machine gun	2
Czech 52 rifle	1
Norinco China 7.62 rifle	1
RPK light machine gun	1
Chinese type 56 rifle	1
Chinese SKS rifle	1
Soviet AKM rifle	4
Soviet AK-47	1
Yugoslav AKMS rifle	1
Egyptian RPD light machine gun	1
.44 Ruber revolver	6
M16A1 rifle	1

Foreign and Canadian Forces small arms were destroyed by melting.

Police weapons

Since no formal statistics are kept on how many firearms are destroyed annually across the country by police services, we can only venture an estimate. A rough estimate would be around 20,000, normally destroyed by melting.

Seized weapons

Approximately 6,000 firearms are seized at the Canadian border every year. Seized weapons are normally destroyed by melting.

China

[Original: English]
[25 June 2001]

The position of China on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is contained in the document A/55/323.

The Chinese Government has always taken strict measures to combat resolutely the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. All of the illegal small arms and light weapons confiscated have been destroyed by China. In 2000, Chinese police have confiscated and destroyed about 1,400 pieces of illegal military weapons. China strictly prohibits the reassembly and resale of decommissioned and retired small arms and ammunitions. Relevant authorities of the Chinese military have carried out unexceptional deformation of important parts of any weapon in this category, making its recovery, reassembling and reuse impossible. Concrete ways of destruction basically include dissection, mechanical cutting, deformation through striking and pressing and melting in steel-making furnaces.

Denmark

[Original: English]
[25 June 2001]

Armed forces

(a) Types and quantities of arms destroyed

Weapons	*2000*	*2001**	*Total*
Revolvers and self-loading pistols	16	0	16
Automatic rifles and carbines	14 902	1	14 903
Sub-machine guns	46 526	0	46 526
Light machine guns	10	0	10
Heavy machine guns	13	21	34
Mortars of less than 100 mm calibre	2	0	2

* Includes all small arms and light weapons destroyed before 15 May 2001.

(b) Techniques and procedures for destruction

All small arms and light weapons are destroyed by cutting, sawing or fragmentation. All metal parts are subsequently melted. Small amounts (single weapons) of small arms are destroyed by cutting them in pieces of no more than 10 centimetres or by sawing them in half, vertically, along the full length of the weapon. Large amounts of small arms are destroyed mechanically by fragmentation in a metal shredder. Light weapons are destroyed by cutting or sawing all vital parts off the weapon.

The destruction of all small arms and light weapons belonging to the Danish Armed Forces is the responsibility of the Army, with the Army Material Command as the implementing authority. Small arms and light weapons are destroyed centrally, under the supervision of the Army Material Command verification team.

Police forces

All small arms and light weapons of the police forces which have been taken out of service are destroyed centrally through melting or shredding.

Confiscated small arms and light weapons

All confiscated weapons are sent to the technical department of the National Commissioner of Danish Police for examination. After examination, some weapons are destroyed while others are returned to the local police constituencies, for example, for use in court cases. Some of the returned weapons are subsequently sold at auction to registered gun dealers, while the rest, including all illegal weapons, are destroyed. Destruction is the responsibility of the local police constituencies and is done by shredding or melting.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[22 June 2001]

National measures to destroy confiscated small arms and light weapons

1. Dumping of unserviceable small arms and light weapons at sea.

2. Collection of usable small arms and light weapons at depots of the Public Security Force for its use as needed.

3. Sale, on occasion, of quantities of such weapons to licensed security companies.

Lithuania

[Original: English]
[2 May 2001]

The following small arms, light weapons and ammunition were destroyed by the Weaponry Fund of Lithuania in 2000:

Amateur home-made guns	197
Shotguns	873
Rifles	276
Pistols	123
Revolvers	5
Gas weapons	238
Pneumatic weapons	63
Machine guns	4
Weapon/firearm parts	999
Grenade/mine components	174 331
Ammunition	53 727
Pyrotechnic articles	1 175

The above-mentioned small arms and light weapons were disassembled and destroyed by the way of melting. Ammunition and pyrotechnic articles were destroyed by the way of incineration. Lithuanian legislation does not specifically spell out methods of destruction. It does provide that confiscated or collected small arms, light weapons and ammunition are handed over to the Weaponry Fund under the Government of Lithuania. The Fund is authorized to destroy confiscated or prohibited weapons, as well as those beyond repair.

Philippines

[Original: English]
[1 June 2001]

> "... to provide, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on the types and quantities of arms destroyed as well as the methods of their destruction ..." (General Assembly resolution 55/33 Q, para. 3)

In this regard, the Philippine Government wishes to submit the following information:

(a) **Types destroyed**. Small arms of various calibres, confiscated, or captured by, surrendered to, or deposited with responsible Philippine Government authorities;

(b) **Quantities destroyed**. The Philippine Government recently destroyed 4,421 confiscated, captured, surrendered or deposited small arms;

(c) **Method of destruction**. Small arms which are slated for destruction are totally destroyed by burning;

(d) **Quantities slated for future destruction**. Scheduled to be destroyed are 14,074 confiscated, captured, surrendered or deposited small arms of various calibres, which are securely stored by the Philippine Government;

(e) **Quantities to be confiscated, captured, surrendered or deposited**. An estimated 16,000 to 17,000 small arms are in the hands of rebel groups. A lesser number is estimated to be in the hands of criminals or criminal organizations.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[25 July 2001]

1. In reference to resolution 55/33 Q on illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, please be informed that the Portuguese authorities have destroyed, during the past five years, the following 1,435 weapons:

(a)	G3 machine gun	1 080
(b)	HK21 machine gun	37
(c)	FBP pistol	57
(d)	Walther P38 pistol	261

2. The following methods of destruction are used:

(a) Cutting the barrels;

(b) Cutting the breechblock;

(c) Crushing.

South Africa

[Original: English]
[16 July 2001]

The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/33 Q, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons", encouraged States to take appropriate national measures to destroy surplus, confiscated and collected small arms and light weapons and to provide the Secretary-General with information on the types and quantities of arms destroyed, as well as the methods of their destruction. South Africa's initiatives to destroy surplus and confiscated weapons nationally and regionally should be considered in addition to initiatives reported in A/55/323 and A/54/404.

South African national destruction initiatives

In keeping with a 1998 decision taken by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee and Cabinet to destroy all surplus, redundant, obsolete and confiscated small arms and light weapons, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) destroyed in the order of 271,867 weapons and their spare parts during the second half of 2000 and first half of 2001. The Government of Norway contributed 1.9 million South African rand to the destruction exercise known as Operation Mouflon. The following is a breakdown

of the disposed SANDF stock (together with their requisite spare parts) during this destruction process:

Weapon	*Quantity*
7.62 mm R1 rifle	198 506
7.62 mm R1 rifle (paratroop)	1 326
7.62 mm M1 rifle	3 708
7.62 mm R1 heavy barrel	2 914
Bren light machine gun	3 637
Vickers machine gun	2 256
R2 rifle	12 237
Uzzi sub-machine gun	1 259
12.7 Browning	412
AK-47	6 000
PPSh sub-machine gun	1 200
AKM rifle	2 000
Other small calibre weapons (confiscated and/or confiscated)	36 412
Total	**271 867**

The above-mentioned approximately 1,385,000 kilograms of small arms and light weapons were destroyed by a fragmentizer process, during which the weapons were cut and pressed into small parts. The fragmentizer separates the metal parts of the weapons from the non-metal parts, and the entire exercise was conducted under strict supervision and auditing by members of SANDF in order to ensure that no serviceable part of any of the weapons escaped destruction. The scrap metal was sold to one of three large steel corporations, such as Iscor Limited.

While proceeds from the scrap metal are used to defray some of the expenses involved in the destruction, the financial assistance needed for the destruction exercises is required largely for safekeeping (i.e., security while awaiting destruction), transportation (both by road and rail) and personnel expenses. Although transparency and security are two significant considerations in the destruction process, experience has shown that the costs involved in the high degree of verification and audibility are important factors given the lack of financial and human resources. The greater the degree of verification specified, the greater the incremental overall cost of the destruction exercise.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) followed up its previous destruction of 102 tons of firearms, parts of firearms and firearm spares (with an estimated value of nearly R 26.5 million), in January 2001 with the destruction of further batches of confiscated and official firearms and ammunition, totalling R 3.2 million. On 9 July 2001, 13,815 confiscated and obsolete small arms, valued at R 6.8 million were destroyed.

In terms of a cooperative agreement signed between the Government of Norway and SAPS, financial assistance has been secured to dispose of a further 11,057 confiscated firearms, valued at R 4 million, and 73,814 official firearms, valued at R 25 million. These will be destroyed during the remainder of 2001. More than 8,265,000 rounds of confiscated and official ammunition valued at R 10.5 million will also be destroyed. The weapons earmarked for destruction by SAPS will be destroyed using the same method as those in the SANDF Operation Mouflon mentioned above.

The total number of small arms that have been destroyed during the second half of 2000 and first half of 2001 or that have been secured for destruction in the second half of 2001 exceeds 370,000.

Regional cooperation

South Africa and Mozambique have cooperated closely over the past five years or so in the collection and destruction of weapons. In this context, a bilateral agreement was formally signed in March 1996 between the Governments of Mozambique and South Africa to enable the carrying out of search and destruction operations of arm caches. These joint operations are carried out under the code name "Operation Rachel". Operation Rachel enhances the efforts by the Mozambican police to destroy illegal arms and the humanitarian work that is jointly done by SAPS and the Mozambican Police. It promotes the professionalism of the various agencies involved. It also promotes the active involvement of the business sector (the Delta Motor Corporation of South Africa sponsored certain logistics, such as vehicles) in the

effort to trace and destroy firearms in Mozambique, thereby contributing to the stability in the southern African region.

Through the ongoing cooperative efforts between Mozambique and South Africa to find and destroy arms caches in Mozambique during Operations Rachel I-VI, more than 14,000 small arms, 7,000 anti-personnel mines, 17,000 hand grenades, mortars and projectiles and over 4 million rounds of ammunition have been destroyed since 1996. Operation Rachel VII started officially on 6 May 2001 and continued until 26 May 2001. The operation involved 30 members of the Mozambican Police and 26 members from SAPS, who comprised members of the special task force, bomb disposal and crime intelligence. The weapons caches were, as with previous operations, destroyed with explosives in the areas in which they were found. The breakdown of weapons destroyed during Operation Rachel VII is as follows:

Weapon	*Quantity*
Weapons (rifles and handguns)	1 383
RPG7 and RPG2 projectiles	329
Mortars (60 mm and 82 mm)	1 037
Nose fuses	398
Explosives (kg)	12
Ammunition	177 000
85 mm tank rounds	65
122 mm rockets	56
RPG2 launchers	44
Magazines	496
Hand grenades	172
Anti-personnel mines	46
Heat STRIM missile	1
B10 recoilless cannon rounds	16
Mortar barrels	11
Augmertig booster charges (case)	1
Detonators, versions	184

South Africa has also been requested by the Government of Lesotho to assist the Lesotho Defence Force with the destruction of 4,000 surplus and redundant small arms.

Regional initiatives

South Africa actively participated in the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to develop a common position on the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These efforts resulted in the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was adopted by the Ministerial Conference convened on this subject on 1 December 2001.

As a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, South Africa has been actively involved in finalizing the Declaration concerning Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community (A/CONF.192/PC/35, annex). This Declaration was adopted at the extraordinary summit meeting of SADC Heads of State and Government, held at Windhoek on 9 March 2001. The Declaration provides the political framework for more concrete cooperation among SADC member States, such as the finalization of the SADC draft protocol on the control of firearms, ammunition and other related materials in the region. At a meeting of SADC ministers responsible for law and order held at Maputo on 29 June 2001, the ministers proposed that the draft protocol be considered by the SADC Council of Ministers for recommendation to the SADC summit meeting of Heads of State and Government in August 2001.

The protocol, once it enters into force, will be a far-reaching subregional legal instrument on the control of both illicit and legally held small arms and light weapons.